

# Better Cotton Appeals Procedure

Version 1.5, August 2024

## Introduction

Under Better Cotton’s assurance model, licensing decisions for Large Farms and Producer Units are based on the outcomes of Licensing Assessments (including credibility checks by Better Cotton staff or third-party verifiers)

Producer Units or Large Farms may appeal against a licensing decision by submitting a written application (along with objective evidence) within 10 working days of being informed of a license cancellation or denial.

The Appellant (i.e. Producer Unit Manager or Large Farm) must submit a completed Appeals Submission form as found on the Better Cotton website. All appeal submissions must:

1. Include a clear rationale for each separate non-conformity being appealed
2. Include detailed supporting evidence for each non-conformity being appealed

Appeal submissions are reviewed and decided by a selected set of members from Better Cotton’s Appeals Committee, which is composed of selected Better Cotton n Team members and independent third-party verifiers. Both Better Cotton Team members and independent third-party verifiers are selected for the appeals panel based on having sufficient and relevant experience. For more information on the Appeals Committee please refer to the *Better Cotton Appeals Committee Terms of Reference*, available on the Better Cotton website.

Appeal decisions are based on a detailed review of the objective evidence provided (both from the appeals submission form and outcomes of assurance/ licensing activities); with reference to the decisive text in the Better Cotton Principles & Criteria v3.0.

## Appeals Procedure

Process Step	Responsible	Actions
1. Submit Appeal	Appellant (PU Manager or LF Manager)	<p>1a. Producer completes the appeal using the relevant Appeal Submission form (available on the Better Cotton website) for either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producer Units</li> <li>• Large Farms</li> </ul> <p>1b. Producer emails the appeal to <a href="mailto:farm_assessment_appeal@bettercotton.org">farm_assessment_appeal@bettercotton.org</a> along with the supporting documents</p> <p><b>Appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of the PU/ LF manager being informed of a licensing decision</b></p>
2. Appeals received and	Better Cotton Assurance Team	2a. Better Cotton confirms to the Appellant that the appeal has been received

Process Step	Responsible	Actions
checked for eligibility		<p>2b. Better Cotton assesses admissibility of appeal against following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of correct template</li> <li>• Submitted by PU / LF Manager</li> <li>• Submitted within 10 working days of receipt of licensing decision</li> <li>• Adequate completion of Appeal Statement (I)</li> <li>• Clear rationale and evidence provided for each non-conformity</li> </ul> <p>2c. If not admissible, Better Cotton informs the Appellant and the appeal may be submitted one further time (within 7 days)</p> <p>2d. If applicable, appeals are translated into English (coordinated by Better Cotton Programme Officers/ Coordinators)</p>
3. Processing of Appeal	Better Cotton Appeals Committee	<p>3a. Better cotton appoints 1-3 selected members of the Appeals Committee to review and decide on the submission ('Appeal Panel'). Members are selected based on local knowledge and availability; any members with direct conflicts of interest are excluded</p> <p>3b. Appeal Panel confirms availability and receives the full appeal submission pack from Better Cotton, including the appeal submission and all relevant licensing documentation (Licensing Assessment reports, Licensing Scorecard).</p> <p>3c. Appeals Panel has minimum 7 days to review the materials received.</p> <p>3c. Better Cotton Assurance team schedules and coordinates a virtual meeting of the Appeals Panel to discuss the submission and reach a final consensus</p>
4. Appeal Decision	Better Cotton Appeals Committee	<p>7a. Appeals Panel evaluates appeal and reaches a decision</p> <p>7b. Appeals Panel documents the decision in writing, including rationale</p>
5. Notification of Appeal Decision	Better Cotton Assurance Team	<p>8a. The decision is communicated to the Appellant via email. All decisions of the Appeals Committee (or its members) are final</p> <p><b><i>Better Cotton aims to communicate final decisions to the Appellant within 35 calendar days of receiving an (eligible) appeals submission</i></b></p>

## Relevant Documents

The following documents support the Appeals Procedure and can be found on the Better Cotton website:

1. Better Cotton Appeal Form Large Farm
2. Better Cotton Appeal Form Producer Units
3. Better Cotton Appeals Committee Terms of Reference